2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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159 142 had the dark full lips which some people call "blue lips" because of their defined darkness and smoothness. They are the kind of lips that never need lipstick, but I have seen her take one of her children's graphite pencils, scratch it against a surface to make the point soft and blunt, and rub it across her lips to accentuate their darkness. In spite of having had five children, she still had an excellent figure, and a figure is important to Sea Island men. Her rounded posterior filled out her jeans and made all of her clothes hang just right. She told me once that 159 she was not sure it was an advantage to a woman to be built the way she was, because if she had not had, in her own words, "such a big • 836 ass," maybe the men would have left her alone, and she would not 142 have got pregnant when she was fourteen. She reflected on that state- 832 ment for awhile, took a long draw from her cigarette, and then amended it by saying, "Hell, who knows what I would have done?" She had always liked men as much as they seemed to like her, she finished by saying, and she probably would have got pregnant anyway.

159 I concluded that her attractiveness emanated not only from her looks but from her style and manner as well. She had a natural, inborn sophistication and presence that any *Vogue* model would envy. I showed her a copy of *Vogue* once, along with *Essence*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Ebony*, and asked if she would like a complimentary subscription to one for Christmas. She flipped through *Vogue* and commented that she had no place to go to wear the kind of "shit" the models displayed; she browsed through *Essence* and said it had too much fancy cooking, and the only food that tasted good to her was cowpeas and bone; she read through *Cosmopolitan* and said it seemed to be about white women wanting sex, and hell, she got enough of that without reading about it. She finally settled on *Ebony* because she liked the pictures of Billy Dee Williams.

In spite of her language and outward hardness, there was something about Ida Mae that made her very feminine. Perhaps it was the way she held her cigarette, the way she walked, or the way she smiled 159 just enough to show a glint of her gold tooth. Perhaps it was the coyness with which she captivated a man's attention, any man's, that 832 made the more respectable women of the community dislike her and the more respectable men, especially the older ones, want to get close enough to her to smell her perfume, maybe inadvertently brush against her, or at least get into a position to see her back action as she walked away. I even overheard a deacon in the church comment to her one

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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were neither sanctioned in law nor respected by slaveholders. Still Baptist churches "devoutly" passed sentence upon Gullahs for "adultery" and "fornication." Perhaps this gesture aimed at giving Gullahs a false send of equality—the same laws for both races regardless of circumstances, as implied by the Savannah River Baptist Association.[70] Possibly this an attempt to demoralize and humiliate—main ingredients of Christianity as taught to slaves. In the interest of "order" and cupidity, masters sometimes denied legitimacy to slaves' emotional inclinations, forcing couples to live together against their will because of convenience and profitability. According to Sam Mitchell, on the Chaplin plantations a slave had to tell the master as soon as he began to "cote." Mitchell added, "If Maussa say 'no you can't marry dat gal' den dat settle it, you can't marry um. He don't lak his slave to marry on nodder puson plantation." In like manner, Harry McMillan testified before the Freedom Inquiry Commission:

> A man saw a young woman and if he liked her he would get a pass from his Master to go where she was. If his owner did not choose to give him the pass he [the master] would pick out another woman and make him [the slave] live with her whether he loved her or not.[71]

Under these oppressive circumstances, where personal preference was ignored, Gullahs understandably had no respect for the church edict establishing rules of conduct about marital status and decisions.

Among Gullahs no stigma was attached to sex without marriage as defined by white society. When asked what proportion of young women had sexual intercourse prior to marriage, Robert Smalls replied the majority did but "it was not considered an evil thing." When individuals settled with mates of their choosing he added, such unions were considered binding. Smalls explained male-female relations among the Gullahs:

> If a woman loses her husband she mourns for him and will not marry again for a year and a half, unless she is driven to it by want and must have somebody to help her. . . .
>
> . . . You hardly ever find a husband will separate from his wife except he finds her going with another man. . . . very few . . . married women are carried away by sexual passion if their husbands can take care of them.[72]

Church minutes, then, belie the actual situation by stressing stealth and immorality among the Sea Island region's black population. Gullahs simply operated under a different moral code. Thomas Chaplin, noted